

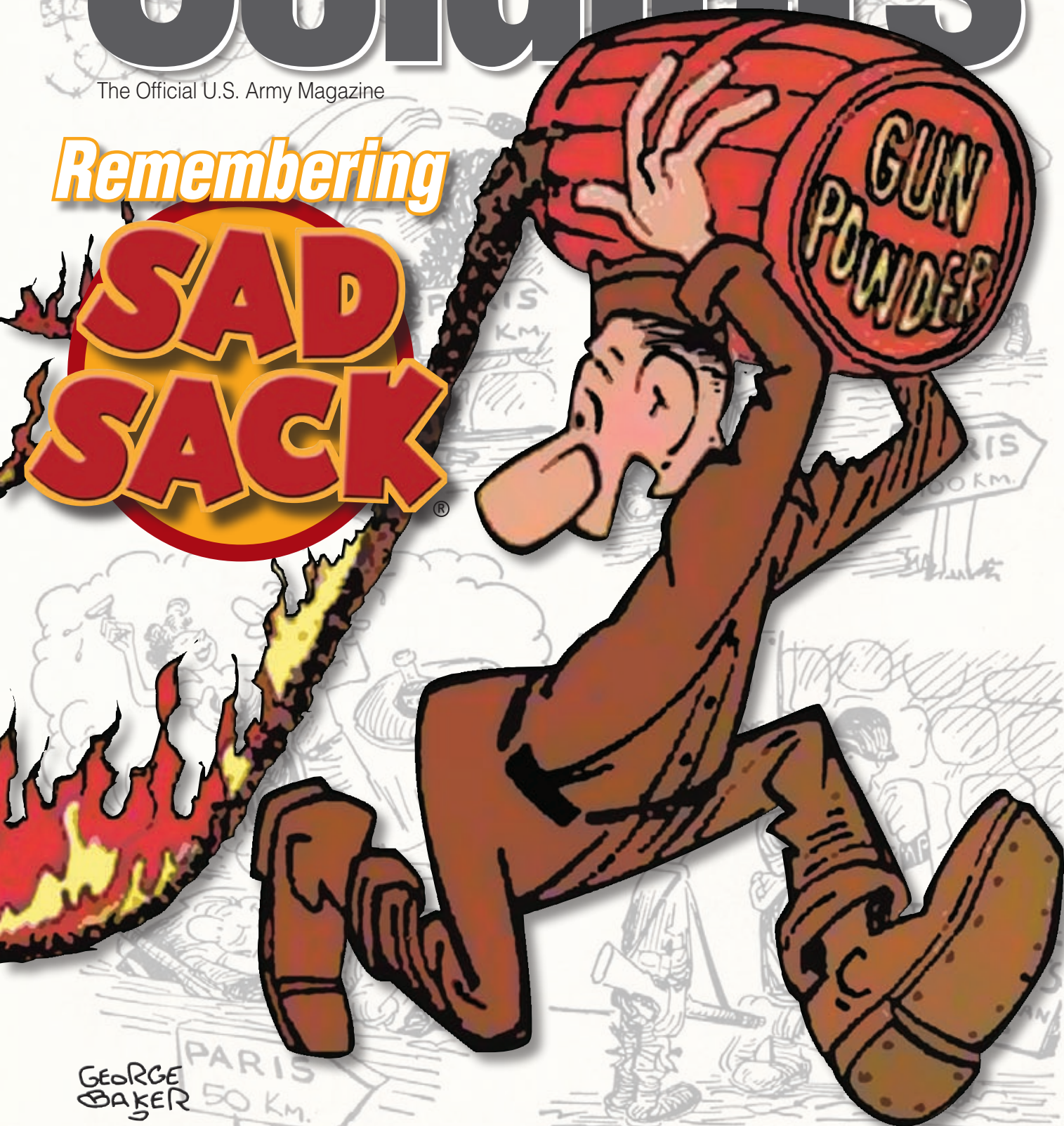
November 2007
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Soldiers

The Official U.S. Army Magazine

Remembering

**SAD
SACK**®



GEORGE
BAKER

SGT. GEORGE BAKER

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Born during World War II, Sgt. George Baker's Sad Sack told humorous Army stories from the enlisted Soldier's point of view.

— Image use courtesy of Alan Harvey, Lorne-Harvey Publications, Inc.

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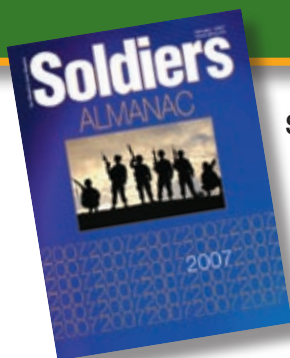
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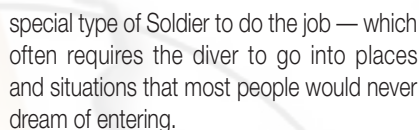


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Mr. James Ross
via e-mail

THE letter in the August issue from the Vietnam veteran who wondered why the nation is still struggling to provide the right kinds of treatment for PTSD really hit the nail on the head.

I've done two tours in Iraq, and returned from the second one about 18 months ago. When the nightmares and the anxiety didn't go away after a few months back at home, I went to my local medical treatment facility to get some help. To make a long story short, I was shuffled back and forth between offices, had

my therapy appointments routinely cancelled at the last moment and, when I mentioned the problems to my company commander, had to listen to a lame and insulting lecture about how “real Soldiers” tough it out without “whining.”

There is still a mindset among a lot of Soldiers, including supposed "leaders," that equates seeking help for post-combat stress and PTSD with cowardice, trying to avoid work, and even a lack of patriotism. As a result, a lot of good Soldiers, and their family members, continue to suffer.

Name withheld by request
via e-mail

IT'S no secret that there are people in the Army who are less than understanding about post-combat stress and PTSD, but the Army is working aggressively — through its current chain-teaching effort and other initiatives — to educate them about the seriousness of the problem and eradicate their prejudices. You and all other Soldiers who seek help for post-combat stress and PTSD are the brave ones, and we salute your courage.

THANKS for your wonderful September story
"Playing Cards to Preserve Antiquities."

Heike Hasenauer did a beautiful job on the story. You will be pleased to know that the Fort Drum Cultural Resources Program has received more requests for the cards, and more requests for additional information about the project, in response to the article.

Dr. Laurie Rush
via e-mail

YOUR September article about the 7th Engineer Dive Team's operations in Kuwait was a fascinating glimpse into a world, and a job, that most Soldiers never hear about.

Having been an Army diver during the Vietnam war, I can tell you that it takes a very

[illegible]

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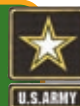
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Training to Def

A large, intense explosion or fireball dominates the right side of the frame, with a desert landscape and hills in the background. The explosion is a massive, billowing cloud of orange and yellow flames and smoke, rising from the ground. The background shows a desert landscape with sparse, low-lying vegetation and a range of hills under a clear sky. The overall scene conveys a sense of power and destruction.



eat IEDs



Story and Photos by Maj. Deanna Bague

MASTER Sgt. Christopher Ferreira and his team of instructors are determined to help defeat the deadly threat of improvised explosive devices.

“This training should be mandatory no matter where our Soldiers go,” Master Sgt. Ferreira said. “They should be required to stop at a station like this one for training.”

The station he’s referring to is operated at Fort Bliss, Texas, by Task Force Mustang of the Army Reserve’s 402nd Field Artillery Brigade.

Master Sgt. Ferreira returned from Iraq in 2006 and is now working

Maj. Deanna Bague works at the Fort Bliss, Texas, Public Affairs Office.



▲ Soldiers from the 104th Military Police Battalion move into position during the IED training exercise at McGregor Range.

◀ An exploding pyrotechnic device simulates the detonation of an IED.

“The training is an eye-opener for Soldiers who haven’t been in a combat theater...”

to update the latest program of instruction, which Soldiers undergoing the training said adds credibility to the course and helps build confidence among the members of deploying units.

Staff Sgt. Andrew Eberhardt, training NCO with Headquarters and HQs. Detachment, 104th Military Police Battalion, and Air Force Sgt. Newell Slagle of the 886th Expeditionary Security Forces Squadron, who are deploying for the second time, said the IED training is very realistic.

“This is a lot more advanced than what we had initially received,” said Staff Sgt. Eberhardt. “The training is an eye-opener for Soldiers who haven’t been in a combat theater, and it’s a great refresher for those who have.”

“The training is very up to date,” Sgt. Slagle said. “The instructors have been in theater and are very knowledgeable about what’s happening there.”

Soldiers, Sailors and Airmen who conduct pre-deployment training at Fort Bliss under the 402nd FA Bde. receive in-depth IED training.

“We show them examples of the different types of ordnance and how easy it is to build them,” said Master Sgt. Ferreira. “We show

them how easy it is to camouflage things. We give them an opportunity to find simulated IEDs that are planted in the same ways that real IEDs are planted by Iraqi insurgents.”

Many servicemembers enter the training course with only a general knowledge about IEDs, said Capt. Aneal Krishnan of the 104th MP Bn. “I’ve never seen a real IED, only pictures of them. I don’t know what an emplaced, camouflaged IED would look like. I think a lot of people are in the same boat as me.”

Staff Sgt. Alfonso Bombita, a

TF Mustang observer-controller and trainer, said servicemembers receive hands-on training using an interactive display called the “Petting Zoo.”

“I ask members of the units coming through to pick up the devices,” Staff Sgt. Bombita said. So all the Soldiers know what an IED looks and feels like.

Master Sgt. Ferreira said the training is intended to counter the IED threat by familiarizing servicemembers with the different types they may encounter, including vehicle- and personnel-borne IEDs, and victim-

operated (as in suicide bombers) and radio-controlled IEDs.

“We have the technology to counter radio-controlled IEDs and jam frequencies to prevent them from exploding,” he said. “But the enemy is constantly adapting and finding ways to defeat the technology.

“So now, because we have defeated radio-controlled IEDs, the enemy is going back to using pressure plates,” said Master Sgt. Ferreira. Command-wired, victim-operated IEDs and passive infrared IEDs are among the simplest to build.

Staying alert and not discussing missions, even in recreation facilities in theater, is extremely important, Master Sgt. Ferreira added. There are third-country nationals in the mess halls and gyms in Iraq. Soldiers don’t know where they go at night or with whom they meet. 🚫



➤ Observer-controller/trainers from Task Force Mustang, 402nd Field Artillery Brigade, examine a mock improvised explosive device.



Keeps Them Flying

Story and Photo by Staff Sgt. Jim Greenhill

A UNIQUE National Guard maintenance task force in Kuwait keeps Army helicopters flying in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The Guard has four Aviation Classification Repair Activity Depots in the United States. Based in California, Connecticut, Mississippi and Missouri, each AVCRAD serves a region of the country. Task Force AVCRAD includes personnel from all of them, as well as other individuals.

Each depot maintains such helicopters as AH-64 Apaches, UH-60 Black Hawks, CH-47 Chinooks and OH-58 Kiowas.

“All the AVCRADs have been

deployed, so they came up with TF-AVCRAD,” said Sgt. 1st Class Joseph Allen, the noncommissioned officer in charge of maintenance for the task force.

A Composite Unit

TF-AVCRAD is composed entirely of National Guard members and civilian contractors. Its approximately 220 members are drawn from the regional AVCRADs and from Maryland’s Aviation Depot Maintenance Roundout Unit, the administrative headquarters for the AVCRADs. Members also come from Kentucky’s Aviation Intermediate Maintenance Unit, supplemented by Soldiers from the National Guard Bureau in Arlington, Va.

The formation of the task force meant

no specific AVCRAD had to be deployed, and it gave AVCRAD members four years at home between deployments.

“The mission is to perform maintenance on aircraft components to make sure that the rotary-wing fleet is up and ready to fly,” said Lt. Col. Clifford Hopkins, a Maryland Guard member and the task force’s executive officer. “Being able to perform this mission with Guard Soldiers saves a lot of time, because we’re forward-deployed. Instead of aircraft components having to go all the way back to the States, we can repair them right here and get them back to the warfighters in a timely manner.”

A Variety of Skills

TF-AVCRAD maintains Army Guard, Regular Army and Army Reserve aircraft theater-wide. The team services avionics, rotors and blades, engines, props and searchlights, and stocks replacement parts. A machine shop makes parts and tools. The AVCRAD has equipment that allows rebuilt engines to be tested.

“We can simulate that engine running at full power on a flying aircraft, so that when we’re finished with it we can put it back in the inventory system, guaranteed to run reliably,” said Staff Sgt. Joseph Gray, assistant shop supervisor.

Some of the AVCRAD’s members are forward deployed in Afghanistan and Iraq to provide even faster service.

“We work for every aviation unit in Iraq and Afghanistan,” Staff Sgt. Gray said.

Some of the work is routine maintenance. Much is necessary because of sand and battle damage.

Wind-blown sand is irritating for people, but it can be an extreme hazard to helicopters. Parts arrive at the AVCRAD with a glass coating — sand transformed by engine heat. Soldiers use an ultrasonic cleaner to loosen the debris. They also must clean sand from electrical parts.

Supporting Heroes

Like many reserve-component members who are not on the frontlines but who still hold essential jobs, TF-AVCRAD members realize that, frustrating as it may be to be one step removed from the war, they are vital to it.

“I’m not the hero,” said Sgt. Dennis Cantrell, deployed from the Kentucky National Guard. “I’m the little geek who makes sure the hero’s helicopter picks him up.”



◀ Kentucky Army National Guard Spc. Dennis Cantrell tests a malfunctioning radio at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait.

Pushing Out A

Story by Capt. Brian M. O'Malley

AFGHAN and international forces are trying to reduce Afghanistan's huge poppy crop — which is grown to produce opium — and convince farmers to plant food crops to feed the population instead.

Poppy eradication is an ever-increasing challenge, however. According to the United Nations' Office on Drugs and Crime, Afghan opium production in 2006 rose 57 percent over that of the previous year.

The profits from Afghanistan's opium production and subsequent drug trafficking have financed the Taliban and other enemies of the government, Defense Department officials said.

To help combat the problem, 1st Lt. Gris Babcock of the Idaho National Guard's 207th Regional Security Assistance Command in Afghanistan, and an employee of the U.S. Department of Agriculture in his civilian job, started an agricultural-research center to determine which crops would be viable substitutes for the poppies.

The center is comprehensive, with laboratories, classrooms and even fishponds with hatcheries, he said. It includes beehives, vineyards and orchards. When completed, it will even have a weather station.

Officials have begun work on 10 acres of orchards that will include apricot, plum, almond, pomegranate, mulberry and wild pistachio trees. The saplings from the orchards will help surrounding villages start their own nurseries. Though the villages will be cultivating the nurseries, they will be under the auspices of the center, 1st Lt. Babcock said.

Another 10 acres will be used to grow six varieties of grapes. Grapes had been all but wiped out by the Taliban, because they could be used to produce wine.

"Grapes are lucrative and require very little summer watering, which makes them an ideal crop. With the introduction of trellising, yields

will increase at least 60 percent in this climate," 1st Lt. Babcock said. "The key is to teach trellising and pruning, which are virtually unknown in this country."

The grapes will be sold as fruit and as raisins. Saffron also will be introduced. This crop is the most promising to replace poppies as a cash crop, officials said. It will be grown first at the center, then be moved to surrounding villages.

"The main hold-up right now for the saffron is signing with a good export company in Herat, but we should have one soon without much difficulty," 1st Lt. Babcock said.


The fishponds will be virtually self-sufficient, with wastewater used to fertilize the plants. A small-scale, sustainable, warm-water fish hatchery will be built to produce grass carp.

"The current fish market in Herat is completely under-supplied, though demand is huge. Our goal will be to link five ponds in the villages. This obviously is very site-specific, but can be done with the abundance of irrigation ditches," 1st Lt. Babcock said.

"Grass carp eat everything, particularly grass, which will grow in wet, muddy pond bottoms in two weeks here," he said.

Additionally, honey production will begin at the station and at the village nurseries on a smaller scale. "This is a highly lucrative crop, and has the added benefit of increasing crop production," 1st Lt. Babcock said.

"Currently, the honey available here is a low grade that comes from Iran," he said. "We will purchase all the equipment, and the agriculture department will bring down a trainer for a course. At the station, a small bottling room will be available for the station's production and for locals to use, if they wish."

When complete, this project will be controlled by Afghans, taught by Afghans and worked by Afghans, U.S. officials said. 



Capt. Brian M. O'Malley is assigned to Task Force Phoenix.

Poppy photo by Heike Hasenauer

Afghan Poppies

Lt. Col. Charles Kohler



1st Lt. Gris Babcock and Capt. Ray Gilmore of the 207th Regional Security Assistance Command discuss one variety of grape that could be substituted for the opium poppies currently grown by so many Afghan farmers.



Afghan soldiers settle in aboard a C-17 for the flight to the United States (*left*), get a close-up look at a .50-caliber machine gun (*above*), enjoy a Kansas City Royals baseball game (*right*) and survey the terrain at Fort Riley (*far right*).



“Vacation” in

AFGHAN National Army soldiers and members of the Afghan National Police recently visited Fort Riley, Kan., to begin what officials of the Combined Security Transition Command – Afghanistan call a “working vacation.”

It’s a program for “the best and brightest ANA soldiers and ANP officers,” CSTC-A officials said. Four times each year a new group of motivated soldiers and police are chosen from their respective units and awarded the vacation, either to an Army training area in Germany or to Fort Riley.

Most of the arriving Afghans couldn’t speak English, and none had ever been to the United States. In fact, many had never been outside Afghanistan, and only one had ever been on a plane, said Sgt. Maj. Ronald Dooley, one of two Soldiers from Forward Operating Base Thunder in Gardez, Afghanistan, who was chosen to es-

cort the group to the United States.

Sgt. Maj. Dooley and Sgt. 1st Class Jeffrey Malo, the other escort, taught the Afghans such things as proper etiquette while on an aircraft, standards of hygiene and U.S.–Afghan cultural differences.

Their Air Force C-17 Globemaster left from Kabul and stopped briefly at Baltimore-Washington International Airport, Md. The Afghans were amazed at the densely populated areas they’d seen from the air.

The bus ride to Fort Riley was equally amazing for the Afghans, who were impressed by the smoothness of the freeway and its wide expanse, Sgt. Maj. Dooley said.

A trip to the post dining facility, where one scrawny soldier ate more than anyone believed his body could hold, capped off the day.

The next day the Soldiers took the group to the post exchange. But many of the Afghans saved their money for a planned trip the following week to Wal-Mart, where many bought toys for their chil-

dren or brothers and sisters, Sgt. Maj. Dooley said.

Following a tour of a sporting goods warehouse that featured aquariums stocked with a variety of fish and a mock wildlife habitat complete with stuffed deer and elk, Sgt. Karim Khan said of the elk, “There’s not enough grass in Afghanistan to feed such an animal. Where in America would this live?”

Back on Fort Riley, upon passing a cluster of houses, one Afghan wanted to know why there were houses on post. When he learned that Soldiers live on the military installation with their families, he thought it was a wonderful idea and wondered why the Afghans don’t have a similar setup.

In a more official capacity, the Afghans participated in an exercise that allowed the soldiers to secure the perimeter of a makeshift village and the police officers to search the buildings. The goal was to train U.S. embedded training teams bound for Afghanistan, officials said.

Soon-to-deploy Soldiers who will be part of the training teams rotated through the training so each could experience working with the ANA and ANP.

The Afghans’ time in the United States ended with a recreation day that started with lunch at a nearby restaurant and was followed by an outing to a major-league baseball game. The game itself didn’t impress the Afghan soldiers as much as the people and the stadium did, Sgt. Maj. Dooley said.

Sgt. Abdul Mohammad summed up his U.S. experience: “Seeing a country that is at peace makes me know what I am fighting for.” 🇺🇸

Staff Sgt. Jo Turner is assigned to the Combined Joint Task Force Phoenix, 203rd Regional Security Assistance Command – East, Troop Medical Clinic.



Kansas

Story and Photos by Staff Sgt. Jo Turner

Remembering

SAD SACK®

Story by Ms. Wendy Rejan

Everybody knows one: the new guy who just can't seem to do anything right, can't seem to do it fast enough or the way the boss wants it done.

In World War II parlance, these unfortunate characters were the infamous "Sad Sacks" who earned a permanent place in the Army lexicon in 1942, thanks to enterprising young cartoonist Sgt. George Baker.

Yank magazine, published from May 1942 to December 1945, provided World War II GIs with much-needed entertainment and comic relief from the war, becoming the most-widely read publication in the history of the U.S. military. It covered

news from home and kept everyone up to date on the latest campaigns in each of the theaters.

Second only to the popularity of the Yank pin-up girl was the Sad Sack cartoon, created by Sgt. Baker in 1941. Beginning in May 1942, his cartoon became the first permanent feature of the magazine.

Sad Sack, a drafted Army private, was a disheveled-looking chap, with a big nose and big ears. One World War II Army wife, Mrs. Theresa Livingstone, remembered Sad Sack's

uniform as always falling apart or looking askew. "He never looked tidy." She said his appearance was "funny in a sad sort of way."

The cartoon followed Sad Sack's undistinguished journey through the bewildering bureaucracy of Army life and epitomized the experiences

of the common Soldier. No matter what kind of day you had had, you could pretty much count on Sad Sack having a worse one.

As Sgt. Baker explained in a 1946 interview available on the official Sad Sack Web site, "The underlying story



Ms. Wendy Rejan works in the historian's office at the Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations.



GEORGE
BAKER

Sad Sack debuted as a comic strip in 1942. In 1949 Harvey Comics began a 287-issue run of Sad Sack Comics, with more than a half dozen spin-off series. Sad Sack continues to provide laughter and fun on the Internet at www.sadsack.net.

The Sad Sack® and ©Sad Sack, Inc. Created by George Baker



of Sad Sack was his struggle with the Army, in which I tried to symbolize the difficulties and frustrations of all enlisted men."

Before being conscripted into the Army at age 27, in June 1941, Sgt. Baker worked in Walt Disney's animation department drawing background effects for Donald Duck and Mickey Mouse cartoons and working on films like "Dumbo" and "Bambi."

Three weeks after leaving Disney, he arrived at Fort Monmouth, N.J., and did animation work for Signal Corps training films. He also drew his first Sad Sack strip. His yet unnamed comic featured the private performing kitchen-police duty.

Sgt. Baker took a three-day pass to head to New York City to market his cartoon, but was rebuffed by every major newspaper.

Determined not to lose heart, he entered the cartoon in an armed forces cartoon competition, where it won first prize. The same cartoon attracted widespread attention when it was later published in Life magazine.

The executive editor of Yank, Maj. Hartzell Spence, saw Sgt. Baker's KP cartoon and asked for a few more samples. Afterwards, Maj. Spence asked him to send in a comic every week, and Sgt. Baker spent every spare moment from then on creating Sad Sack cartoons for Yank.

War Department officials eventually transferred Sgt. Baker from the Signal Corps at Fort Monmouth to the Yank staff in Manhattan, in June

1942. Sgt. Baker was sent to dozens of training camps to learn about all the different branches of the Army. As American troops became engaged in major battles in Europe and the Pacific, he was sent to every theater to keep his character abreast of current developments.

There were 21 editions of Yank at one time, all with the same content except for a few pages that were dedicated to local news and features. Sgt. Baker was stationed at several overseas bureaus during his time with Yank, including Panama, Italy, the Philippines, Okinawa and Japan.

In his own career, Sgt. Baker was highly successful and pulled off quite a feat with his other Yank staff members when they arrived in Tokyo

a week ahead of the occupation forces and took over a Japanese printing plant.

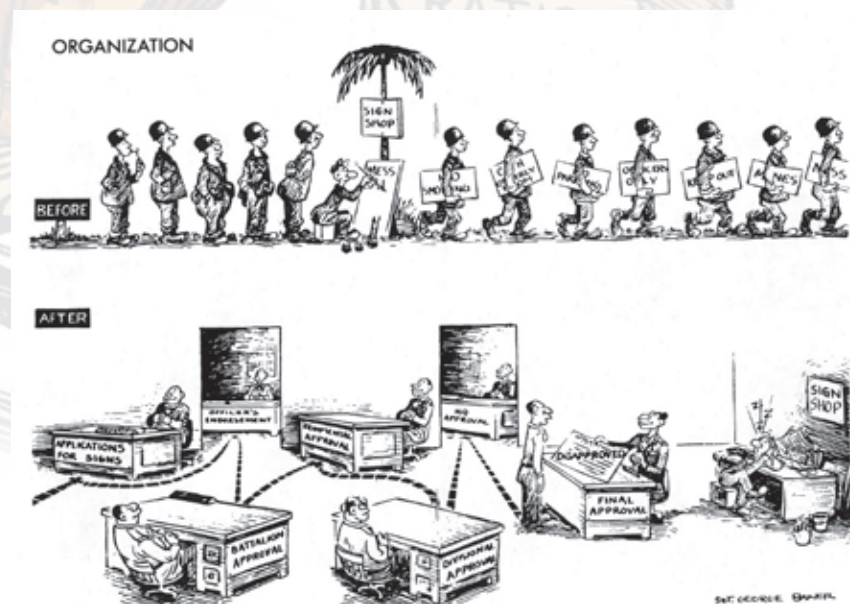
Under difficult conditions they managed to get out a special edition of Yank, which featured the Japanese surrender on the battleship USS *Missouri* and was delivered to Gen. Douglas MacArthur when he arrived.

Sad Sack even graced the cover of Yank, on June 25, 1943. Soldiers began to create Sad Sack clubs and only allowed enlisted members below the rank of corporal to enter. Two Army songs were also composed about Sad Sack, and the lyrics of Elvis Presley's "Jailhouse Rock" paid homage to Sad Sack.

Baker's cartoon reportedly drew more fan mail than Yank's popular pin-up girls. Sgt. Baker said Soldiers often wrote to him with suggestions from their own experiences.

When Yank stopped publishing in December 1945, Sad Sack received worldwide syndication through Simon and Schuster publishers. And Paramount Pictures even made a movie titled "Sad Sack" in 1957, with Jerry Lewis playing the lead.

The cartoon was in newspaper syndication until 1960. It lived on until Sgt. Baker's death in 1975 and was continued by various other artists through the early 1980s. 🇺🇸



Bridge Helper

Story by Mr. Jerry Harben

DISASTERS can result in pain, crippling injuries and death. But they can also bring the best in the human character to the forefront.

Such was the case when the Interstate 35 bridge across the Mississippi River in Minneapolis, Minn., collapsed Aug. 1, killing nine people and injuring 100 others.

Emergency responders said the number of casualties would have been greater had people at or near the scene not immediately raced to rescue the motorists whose vehicles had plunged into the river.

Among the heroes that day were Army Reserve 2nd Lt. Nathan Lund, a student at the University of Minnesota Dental School, and his wife, Christine, a registered nurse.

2nd Lt. Lund said his brother saw the bridge collapse and called to tell him about it. Second Lt. Lund's immediate reaction was to go to the scene to help.

"Not without me, you're not," Mrs. Lund said. "We threw on our scrubs, grabbed a tourniquet, masks, gloves and a stethoscope, and ran to our car. We're five miles from the bridge and we got there within 10 minutes," 2nd Lt. Lund said.

After looking for injured people at the northwest and southwest corners of the bridge, they were told by a police officer that help was needed at the southeast corner — on the other side of the still unstable bridge.

An emergency boat then pulled up with three medical students aboard. They told the Lunds that a triage site had been set up on the bridge's northeast corner.

"We jumped in the emergency watercraft and roared off," 2nd Lt. Lund said. When the couple arrived at the site,

Mass Communication Specialist Seaman Joshua Adam Nuzzo, USN



▲ Debris lays scattered in the Mississippi River and at the site of the I-35 bridge collapse in Minneapolis, Minn., Aug. 14, 2007. 2nd Lt. Nathan Lund and his wife, Christine (above), were among the first aid-givers to respond.

they saw that "everything was on fire, live wires were making sparks," he said. And they could see about a dozen injured people lying in a row near the bridge.

While Mrs. Lund listened to the lung functions of some of the injured, her husband checked vital signs. He helped load a man with a skull fracture into a pickup truck for evacuation.

"The bridge was still shaking and creaking, so we moved the patients about 30 yards away. Then four more pickup trucks arrived, and we put the other patients in them," 2nd Lt. Lund said.

"There weren't as many injured as I expected," he added. But the injured had suffered broken backs and ribs, and internal bleeding. One girl had fractured both of her legs. And one victim suffered a punctured lung from a broken rib.


After loading the injured for transport

to a hospital, the couple moved to a Red Cross station and helped care for additional victims of the disaster.

The Lunds' actions were recognized when ABC News honored them as Persons of the Week on a Friday broadcast.

"I think you have an obligation to help people if you can," the young officer said when asked why he raced to the scene when so many people were running away from it. "As an officer, I think I should set a good example."

2nd Lt. Lund received a direct commission into the Army in January 2004 and is attending college, thanks to a scholarship provided by the Health Professions Scholarship Program.

He joined the active-duty ranks after he graduated from college in May. He's hoping to attain a residency in dentistry through the Army. 

Mr. Jerry Harben works for the U.S. Army Medical Command Public Affairs Office.





Afghanistan

Sgt. Michael Espejo of the 66th Military Police Company from Fort Lewis, Wash., pulls security at the Pakistani border at Torkham Gate.

— Photo by Pfc. Daniel M. Rangel

► Iraq

Pfc. Rebekah Yokel of Headquarters and HQs. Company, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, talks with an Iraqi girl during a visit by 80 Iraqis to an ancient ziggurat located on Ali Air Base. — Photo by Master Sgt. Robert W. Valenca, USAF



▼ Iraq

Cpl. James Dyke, of A Troop, 2nd Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment, 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Div., hands out toys to children in Kahn Bani Sa'ad. — Photo by Spc. John Crosby





▲ Rhode Island

The U.S. Army Vessel *New Orleans* is serving as a diving platform for Army and Navy divers working to raise a former Russian submarine in Providence Harbor. — Photo by Staff Sgt. Isac A. Graham



▲ Iraq

Sgt. Jeffrey Alexander of the 982nd Combat Camera Company shoots video of a polluted street in the Adhamiya district of Baghdad. — Photo by Spc. Jeffery Sandstrum



▲ Fort Dix, N.J.

A New Mexico Army National Guard member maneuvers around an obstacle during individual movement techniques training. — Photo by Staff Sgt. Russell Lee Klika

Training

Story and Photos by Sgt. Maj. Larry Lane

The war against terrorism has reshaped the Army in many ways, including the ways in which the service recruits new Soldiers. The U.S. Army Recruiting and Retention School at Fort Jackson, S.C., is where today's recruiters learn the tools and techniques of their vital mission.

WHEN Col. James Comish became commandant of the Recruiting and Retention School nearly two years ago, he said he wanted to take the curriculum in "a new direction, rather than toward death by PowerPoint presentations and lectures." He also said he wanted to add more "experience-based" training with more hands-on learning.

"We try to give our students an experience-based learning environment so that when they walk out of here they already know how to be recruiters and are confident in their skills and competent in their tasks," Col. Comish said.

Part of that experiential training includes a mock recruiting station, fully equipped to resemble the stations the recruiters will eventually occupy. Recruiters create files on prospects, conduct phone interviews and analyze the area served by their stations. Some of this training is with real prospects enlisting from the com-

munities near Fort Jackson.

"We also have recruiter trainees do face-to-face prospecting, where they actually go out in the community," Col. Comish said.

Instructors accompany the future recruiters to provide assistance and oversight where needed, and to gather data for after-action reviews on each prospective recruiter's approaches and techniques.

Col. Comish said recruiters returning for advanced training compliment the cadre on the new methods of qualifying the new recruiters, wishing they had had a similar learning experience. "We're sending out much more qualified recruiters," he said.

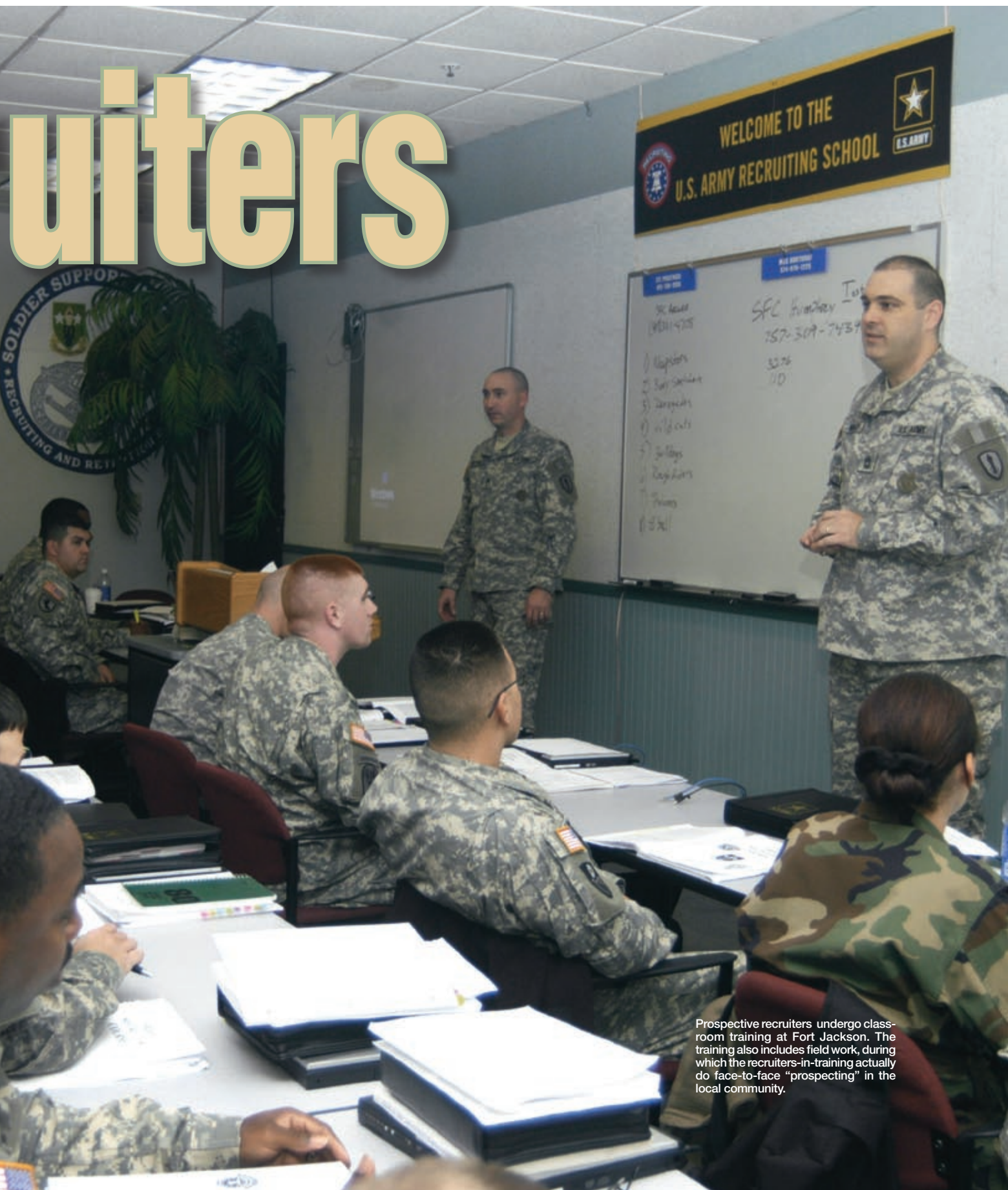
"Most of them have been on deployments, which helps them explain to prospective recruits what they may experience during their service. Those are the kind of questions that parents and other influencers will ask," Col. Comish said. Prospects should be told they can expect to deploy and go to war, he added, and that their basic combat training will prepare them for that eventuality.

Col. Comish added that the school and recruiting duty help polish and



Sgt. Maj. Larry Lane is assigned to the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command Public Affairs Office at Fort Monroe, Va.

uiters



Prospective recruiters undergo classroom training at Fort Jackson. The training also includes field work, during which the recruiters-in-training actually do face-to-face "prospecting" in the local community.



Meeting with students to offer information on enlisting in the Army is a top priority for recruiters seeking the best-qualified individuals for Army careers.

sion and improve their knowledge base, they also acquire a new set of analytical tools they will eventually use in their future areas of responsibility. These tools will help them determine where, when and how they can be most successful, said Command Sgt. Maj. Jack Peters, the school's com-

mand sergeant major.

"Knowing cyclical events, you can determine trends and do trend analysis," he said.

For example, a recruiter can study historical data to select what day of the month he should provide a specific briefing for a certain high school, to target a grade level where students are historically interested in enlisting in the Army.

"It allows you to be proactive in your recruiting plan and allows you to do an analysis of how you can improve your operation. It's not about going up to a recruiter and saying 'get me so many appointments,'" Command Sgt. Maj. Peters said, referring to past practices. Recruiters are trained to develop a plan based on information drawn from analysis, a more productive method of achieving their recruiting goals.

"The Army Interview" is another new tool recruiters use to help future Soldiers determine what they may want from an Army enlistment.

"The interview is more of a counseling program to meet the needs of the prospective recruit. It's a more personal, individualized approach," Command Sgt. Maj. Peters said.

The interview has 12 compo-

nents, which include identifying or establishing the prospect's goals and analyzing and comparing available alternatives.

"We're about finding future Soldiers who can become part of the total Army organization and its total Army values — the intrinsic beliefs about who we are and what we do," Command Sgt. Maj. Peters said. "We want to engender in Soldiers a lifelong commitment that is deep and rich in tradition. We look at their goals, identify and compare their future desires, then engender a commitment to become a part of a much bigger organization. This organization is about a way of life for the long term."

Motivating New Recruiters

While some Soldiers volunteer to become recruiters, most are still DA-selected and may not show up at the school with the motivation to do well in their new career, said cadre member Sgt. Maj. Robert Bullen. One of the cadre's missions is to inspire and motivate the students to do well in the school so they can do well as recruiters.

Sgt. Maj. Bullen said he reminds the students, especially those who have already deployed to war, of the important role they now play in supporting our Army at war.

He said he will ask a recruiting class: "How many of you have deployed with 100 percent unit strength?" Very few Soldiers will raise their hands, and he'll then say: "And why is that? Could it be that recruiters didn't recruit enough people for you to deploy with? If you really miss your unit and your comrades in arms, then you owe it to yourself and to them to be the best Army recruiter you can be, so that you can help fill those ranks."

Sgt. Maj. Bullen said the school will always stress the Warrior Ethos,

refine an NCO's skills, providing a recruiter with a higher set of communication skills and developing the NCO into an adaptive leader for the Army.

"We see ourselves as a premier leadership-training facility and we want our recruiters to be adaptive leaders. Soldiers gain a lot of skills in the schoolhouse — how to work with the media, how to do a presentation for an audience, how to interact with politicians and other VIPs in the community, and how to relate to moms and dads. This is a great place for recruiters to refine their skills."

While the bulk of recruiters are selected by the Department of the Army, Col. Comish noted that today's recruiters are generally excited about the mission. Patriotism, he said, is one of the main reasons people join the Army. It's also a major reason recruiters strive for success in supporting an Army at war.

"They're thrilled about being recruiters, because they know how important the mission is, and they want to get out there and do the best job possible," he said.

New Tools in the Kit

While students in the Recruiting and Retention School learn their mis-

Sgt. Maj. Bullen said he reminds the students, especially those who have already deployed to war, of the important role they now play in supporting the Army at war.

the Army Values and the Soldier's Creed as guiding principles behind a recruiter's duty to the Army.

One of the greatest challenges for a recruiter is to accept his new mission for the Army, said Master Sgt. Ivan Santanagomez, a former infantryman and one of the school's instructors.

"I came into this field kicking and screaming, because I was told I was going to do something I didn't feel equipped to do," he said, reflecting on his original, involuntary selection for recruiting duty.

He cautions new recruiters to "deal with reality," because the sooner they accept their missions the sooner they will be successful.

The New Recruiter

The Department of the Army directs some Soldiers to recruiting duty, based on a review of their personnel records. Others volunteer to wear the recruiter badge. All of the nearly 8,000 annually trained recruiters have their own outlooks on how they'll serve successfully as recruiters.

Staff Sgt. Briana Vanness, an Army Reservist with degrees in both social work and business, is now a recruiter in Helena, Mont.

"The key to this whole thing is getting to know your community and establishing a good rapport," she said. "If you don't have that support, you're not going to make it."

Staff Sgt. Juan Castillo decided to become a recruiter after three tours in Iraq as a field artillery tactical data-systems specialist.

"After being deployed three times I wanted to do something different and serve the Army in a different way. I think it will have a positive effect on my career," he said. "I can bring people into the service and let them see what we're doing, and what 'Army Strong' is all about."

Slated for recruiting duty in Queens, N.Y., Staff Sgt. Castillo said he's looking forward to the challenge.

Mr. Travis Absher falls within the newest category of recruiters, civilian contractors. While wearing his Army Reserve uniform he is a second lieutenant and an engineer platoon leader at Fort Thomas, Ky. As a civilian, he's a recruiter in Louisville, Ky.

"Anyone who talks to me says I'm a very good salesperson. It was either used cars or going into recruiting," he joked. "I'm an outgoing person and I love to talk to people."

Each recruiter may go through the same instruction, but each has unique strengths to use in the mission. The one critical ingredient all recruiters need, Sgt. Maj. Bullen said, is self-motivation.

"We can help instill that, but motivation has to come from them to get it going and keep it going," Sgt. Maj. Bullen explained. "When recruiters move to their stations, they'll have to maintain the same motivation the cadre helped establish at the school. If you're not excited about the Army, it doesn't matter how much book smarts you have. You're not going to do a very good job."

Future of Recruiting

Recruiters are continuing to meet the goals the Army sets for them, though such was not the case in 2005, when recruiters fell short of the Army goal. However, a fresh look at how

recruiters are trained and an influx of combat-patch-wearing Soldiers have helped, said Lt. Col. Michael Faruqui, deputy commandant of the Recruiting and Retention School.

"About three quarters of our recruiters now have combat experience, so they're not afraid to go and talk to people," Lt. Col. Faruqui said. As a former battalion commander who spent most of his time in special


operations, he recognizes the important skills developed while working with people from different cultures.

"Recruiters who have been deployed have developed the skills needed to interface with different cultures, and they bring those skills to us," he said. If Soldiers can talk to an Iraqi general, talking to a high school professor should come easier, he said.

"The challenge is

to try and break through all of those stereotypes about what others may think it means to be associated with the military," he added.

Lt. Col. Faruqui said recruiters play an instrumental part in shaping the Army's future. They strive to recruit the finest Soldiers, who often continue to support the nation in leadership roles long after their uniformed service ends.

"Many of our general officers are previously enlisted Soldiers. And every one of those officers was recruited," he said. "We are recruiting the future leaders of the Army. That's our strategic purpose; that's the ongoing sustainment for the long haul of our nation." 



▲ A recruiter speaks with a prospect about joining the Army, providing concise information that helps the individuals to choose the proper path to a military career.



For more information on suicide prevention, visit www.armyg1.army.mil/HR/suicide/training.asp.

Suicide Prevention: Watch Out for Your Buddy

THE Army wants Soldiers and their families to know help is available to those struggling with issues that sometimes bring about suicide.

Soldiers who kill themselves usually do so because they can't see another way out of a painful situation, said the Army's chief of chaplains, Chaplain (Maj. Gen.) Douglas L. Carver. Frequent and longer deployments add more burdens, especially on relationships, he said.

Soldiers in-theater need to be aware of, and in tune with, their fellow Soldiers, Chaplain Carver said.

"You might notice alterations in personal behavior or emotional changes in attitude that are just very different from how you know that person," he said.

If the chaplain can't help, the struggling Soldier will be provided treatment through community counseling programs and the medical community. — *Army News Service*

Catalog Offers Jump on Holiday Shopping

HOLIDAY shoppers can get a jump on holiday shopping with the 2007 Exchange Holiday Catalog.

Filled with gifts and collectibles from Disney, Waterford, Hummel, Bose, Apple, Sharp and more, the new catalog offers more than 900 gift ideas, with many priced under \$20.

"The 2007 Exchange Holiday Catalog offers military families a wide selection of gift-giving ideas," said Exchange Catalog Chief Marketing Officer Richard Sheff. "Shoppers who use their Military Star Cards will enjoy added affordability and value with three months of no payments and no interest."

The 2007 catalog is available at all main stores and online at www.aafes.com.

Prices in this all-services catalog are valid through Jan. 1, 2008, for any authorized exchange customer.

Active-duty military members, military retirees, Reservists, National Guard members, Department of Defense civilians stationed overseas, exchange employees and their family members are all authorized exchange privileges.

Orders can be placed by mail, fax or phone. Toll-free orders can be placed from the United States, Puerto Rico or Guam at (800) 527-2345.

— *Chris Ward, The Army and Air Force Exchange Service*

Linking Vets With Jobs

FOR Soldiers and Airmen seeking work, the Hire a Hero Web site (www.hireahero.org) links military jobseekers with military-friendly employers.

Hire a Hero is intended to match employers searching for employees with military qualities and skills with job seekers looking for careers. More than 600 businesses have participated and more than 180,000 individuals have registered at the site.

The site also allows military members to expand their networking abilities, especially in their home communities.

Hire a Hero and the California National Guard work with that state's public affairs office, Office of Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve, and family services offices to assist vets in obtaining employment as well as recruiting and retention.

According to California Army Guard Col. Charlotte Miller, 694 California employers have posted more than 20,000 potential jobs on the site, and 706 connections have been made between employers and California Guard members.



— *ARNEWS*

New Army Combat Shirt Debuts

THE Program Executive Office-Soldier has designed the new Army Combat Shirt to be more breathable.

The flame-resistant ACS is in development for use under body armor. It is designed to replace two layers, the Army Combat Uniform jacket and moisture-wicking T-shirt, thus reducing bulk and heat stress.



The ACS features a mock-turtleneck, long sleeves in the universal camouflage pattern, flat seams that reduce bulk and chafing, and built-in anti-abrasion elbow pads. The shirt is moisture-wicking, anti-microbial and odor-resistant.

Another change that increased breathability was replacing the elastic cuffs to keep out sand with adjustable cuffs that can be loosened for ventilation, or tightened to keep out sand and other debris. Hook-and-loop tape was added to the right sleeve to accommodate a name tape, rank and infrared flag.

The left sleeve also has hook-and-loop tape for a unit patch.

The shirt is still in development, and further fielding will be determined by the Department of the Army.

— Debi Dawson, PEO Soldier Strategic Communications Office

Bonus Available to CID Special Agents



DEFENSE officials approved a \$20,000 lump-sum Critical Skills Accession Bonus for active-duty enlisted Soldiers who successfully complete the CID Special Agent Warrant Officer Basic Course.

The CSAB targets the 31-series Military Occupational Specialty for noncommissioned military police officers selected for appointment to warrant officer positions in the 311A MOS. The program is effective through Sept. 30, 2008.

Enlisted CID special agents with at least 24 months of CID investigative experience and a minimum of 60 credit-hours of college, and who are no longer on probationary status, are eligible to receive the bonus.

Qualified CID enlisted Soldiers who are interested in becoming warrant officers are encouraged to contact their team chiefs, special agents-in-charge and battalion operations officers for letters of recommendation.

According to the MILPER message, Active Guard Reserve, Mobilized Reserve and National Guard Soldiers are not authorized to participate in the CSAB program.

Applications and checklists are available at www.usarec.army.mil/hq/warrant. — ARNEWS

For more information on CID visit www.cid.army.mil.

Army Takes Issue With Payday Loans

EVERYONE'S heard the familiar radio spots cajoling people to take out a payday loan, which is paid back when your paycheck arrives. These loans are dangerous and damaging, requiring high interest rates and often sending people into a downward financial spiral.

The Defense Department considers payday lending one of the top 10 key issues impacting the quality of life of Soldiers. The 2007 National Defense Authorization Act caps interest rates for military personnel at 36 percent and prohibits the use of a personal check or other method to access a borrower's

bank account.

The law won't stop Soldiers from using payday loans, said Mr. Leonard Toyer, a financial counselor with Army Community Services, but it will lessen the amount of debt servicemembers carry.

Payday-loan requirements are simple: a bank account and steady source of income. The loan recipient writes a post-dated check to the lender for cash. Interest rates are extremely high, usually around 300 percent or more. Repayment is usually required within two weeks.

If the recipient cannot pay the loan when it's due, he or she must deal

with late and bounced check fees and possible legal action. To avoid default, the borrower must roll the debt into a new loan with the same high rates.

According to Trina Reliford, the Army Emergency Relief officer for ACS, Soldiers can fill out applications for interest-free loans and receive checks the same day with a commander's approval under the Commanders Referral Program.

Soldiers may receive up to \$2,000 a year in two loans, and the first loan must be repaid before seeking Commanders Referral again. — Tamika Matthews, the "Pentagram," Fort Myer, Va.



Texas NG Helps Hurricane Dean Victims

MCALLEN, Texas

MILITARY vehicles and commercial buses from Texas rolled toward the Rio Grande Valley to help evacuate residents along the south Texas and Mexico coastlines affected by Hurricane Dean in August.

MORE than 4,700 National Guard Soldiers and Airmen in such fields as aviation, health, communications, transportation and security joined local, state and federal emergency responders. Five hundred all-terrain vehicles and 50

fixed- and rotary-winged aircraft had been pre-staged at several key locations throughout Texas.

Approximately 700 commercial and 400 public school buses driven by contract and volunteer drivers were also committed to help with the evacuation of an estimated 42,000 residents.

— SFC Lek Mateo, 100th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment



Fort Hood Spouse Featured on Kellogg's Box

FORT HOOD, Texas

MRS. Robin Crouse was bashful about having a co-starring role with breakfast star Tony the Tiger.

Mrs. Crouse and five others are featured on boxes of Kellogg's Frosted Flakes in recognition for being outstanding military supporters. Each received last year's National Military Family Association Very Important Patriot award.

Mrs. Crouse, an Air Force spouse and executive director of Fort Hood's United Service Organizations, received the award for the thousands of hours she has donated to Fort Hood families.

She rallies dozens of volunteers to make sure deploying troops have care packages and food before they get on the plane, and has coordinated the sending of thousands of "goodie boxes" to troops overseas.

The cereal boxes featuring Mrs. Crouse were on sale at Fort Hood commissaries and are not available in civilian stores, commissary officials said.

— Ms. Emily Baker, Fort Hood, Texas, "Sentinel"



Hybrid-Electric Propulsion for New Combat Vehicles

WARREN, Mich.

THE Army recently unveiled its first hybrid-electric propulsion system for a new fleet of Manned Ground Vehicles. The service is developing and building eight new MGV variants for 15 Future Combat Systems brigade combat teams.

All eight commonly designed MGV variants will provide Soldiers with enhanced survivability, increased speed and mobility, new network-based capabilities, and more modern, modular technology.

The Army is saving money by employing a common chassis across all eight MGV variants. The MGV chassis reduce design, production and sustainment costs.

For the first time, the Army will be integrating a functional hybrid-electric drive system into a combat vehicle. The drive system is part of the propulsion system that will power the vehicles.

The Army is using hybrid-electric power because the more modern FCS BCTs have much greater electrical power requirements than the current-force heavy BCTs. Hybrid-electric vehicles provide the requisite electrical power by employing a rechargeable energy-storage system. An ancillary benefit of the hybrid-electric vehicles is improved fuel economy and less reliance on oil, natural gas and other fossil fuels.

The first hybrid-electric MGV variant, the Non-Line-of-Sight Cannon, will begin production in 2008.

— Army News Service



Army Chef Inducted into Top Culinary Society

FORT CARSON, Colo.

THE American Academy of Chefs has inducted Chief Warrant Officer 4 David J. Longstaff, senior mission command food advisor and a certified executive chef, into its honor society in Orlando, Fla.

An induction into the AAC is reserved for individuals who have made significant contributions to both the culinary profession and the American Culinary Federation.

Out of 19,000 ACF members, only 800 have been inducted into the AAC honor society, and CW4 Longstaff is only the third military person to receive this honor.

He enlisted in the Army as a cook in 1984 and attended the Warrant Officer Candidate Course in 1995. CW4 Longstaff has been a member of the ACF since 1986, a certified executive chef since 2003 and a certified culinary judge since 2005.

He has competed in culinary competitions since 1987. He managed the U.S. Army Culinary Arts Team from 2003 to 2006, when the team won 33 medals at the 2004 Culinary Olympics in Erfurt, Germany; the junior team also won silver and bronze medals while competing in England in 2005.

— Ms. Rebecca E. Tonn, Fort Carson, Colo., PAO



A Heartfelt Memorial

Story by Sgt. 1st Class Chris Farley
and Spc. Michael D. Weerts

EDITOR'S NOTE:

The staff of Soldiers magazine would like to thank all the servicemembers who so nobly serve our country and the families who tirelessly support them.

As we remember Sgt. 1st Class Dan H. Gabrielson of the 88th Regional Readiness Command's 652nd Engineer Company and focus on his unit's memorial to 21 88th RRC Soldiers killed in action and in accidents, we pay homage to all the Soldiers who have died fighting in Iraq and in the war on terror.

Our prayers and thoughts are with the loved ones they left behind.

ON July 9, 2003, the 88th Regional Readiness Command at Fort McCoy, Wis., suffered the loss of its first Soldier killed in action in Iraq — and the first of its Soldiers to die in combat since World War II.

Sgt. 1st Class Dan H. Gabrielson of the 652nd Engineer Company was killed by hostile fire in Baqubah.

Sgt. 1st Class Chris Farley and Spc. Michael D. Weerts are assigned to the 88th RRC Public Affairs Office.



► An 88th RRC Soldier at the command's liaison office at Fort McCoy pays his respects to fallen comrades.

To honor his sacrifice and memory, 88th RRC Soldiers at the liaison office at Fort McCoy placed a picture of Sgt. 1st Class Gabrielson on their office wall. The picture has since evolved into a more elaborate memorial honoring 21 88th RRC Soldiers killed in action and seven Soldiers killed in accidents. There is even a special place for missing 88th RRC Soldier Staff Sgt. Keith Maupin.

The liaison office's Lt. Col. Daniel Pasch said Sgt. 1st Class Gabrielson's death hit his team members pretty hard, but the loss inspired them to pay tribute to Soldiers who'd died. He also said the memorial is a constant reminder of the importance of properly preparing Soldiers for combat so they'll return safely.

As more people saw the memo-



rial, more volunteered their opinions, ideas and time to make it better, Lt. Col. Pasch said.

Those who helped build the memorial didn't want to be identified or claim any recognition for their role in its creation, he said, because "the project is bigger than any one person. The memorial is a small way of showing reverence and respect for the Soldiers who died."

Plaques containing photos of each Soldier, with rank and unit patch, hang on a reinforced cloth backdrop of red, white and blue. A blue banner at the top of the memorial reads: "We Will Never Forget."


An M-16 shell casing was placed in a drilled hole on each plaque. Hanging from the casing are the Soldiers' identification tags, with their names and the dates of birth and death.

In the middle of the wall, an encased American flag is folded with three polished silver M-16 casings placed inside. The cartridges represent the three volleys fired during the funeral service, as well as the Army tenets: duty, honor and country.

"...the project is bigger than any one person. The memorial is a small way of showing reverence and respect for the Soldiers who died."

Above the flag is a plaque for the missing Soldier, Staff Sgt. Maupin.

When visitors come to view the memorial, they're met by a member of the liaison team and then left alone to reflect or mourn in private, Lt. Col. Pasch said.

When deployed units return to Volk Field, Wis., the liaison team erects a "fallen Soldier" display, with helmet, boots, an inverted rifle and identification tags to honor those who died during the deployment. Unit officials also place a commemorative wreath to honor the dead. 



◄ The memorial evolved from a tribute to the first 88th RRC Soldier killed in action since World War II.

By Mr. Chris Frazier

AT some point this year, many people will have a run-in with “Old-Man Winter.” To prepare for the inevitable rain, wind, snow and ice, people typically ensure that their cold-weather clothing is ready to wear.

Preparing vehicles for the changing climate is equally important to staying on schedule and avoiding frustrations. By doing a little preventive maintenance, you should be able to keep your vehicle safely on the road.

How well a vehicle responds to cold-weather conditions is usually up to the operator. Whether you’re driving a privately owned or government vehicle, a little maintenance goes a long way, according to officials at Fort Bragg, N.C.’s, Public Safety Business Center.

Failing to properly service your vehicle could leave you stranded or, even worse, in a life-threatening situation, officials said.

Here’s a checklist of things you should do to ensure your vehicle’s ready for winter: (If you’re driving a military vehicle, follow the maintenance checklist provided by your motor pool for your military-unique vehicle.)

Mr. Chris Frazier works at the U.S. Army Combat Readiness Center at Fort Rucker, Ala.

- Check radiator hoses for leaks and cracks, and ensure clamps are tight. Replace cracked or brittle hoses.
- Check the antifreeze level and ensure it is rated for temperatures of at least -30 Fahrenheit.
- Check headlights, taillights, parking lights and turn signals, as well as such interior lights as map or dome lights. Ensure headlights are properly aligned. Adding extra weight to the trunk to increase traction may affect headlight alignment.
- Check the battery to ensure proper fluid levels, and check that connections are tight and cables and cable ends are not corroded. If the engine turns over slowly, have the battery checked for serviceability by a qualified mechanic.
- Check the oil and oil filter. Use an oil weight recommended for extreme temperatures.
- Check tires for adequate tread and inflation and ensure all tires are the same size and type. Do not mix radial and conventional tires. All-season radials



COLD WE


will provide some degree of traction, though tires with snow tread are better. Studded snow tires are best but have limited use and should be used only when the road is packed with snow or ice.

- Check the heater and defroster for proper working order.
- Check wiper blades. Wipers designed for winter use help prevent windshield icing.
- Check the windshield washer to ensure the washer motor is working and the nozzles are properly aligned.
- Check the exhaust system for leaks. Any evidence of fumes may indicate carbon monoxide is present. Replace a faulty exhaust or make adjustments to stop leakage.
- Check the engine thermostat to ensure it's working properly.
- Check the radio, as it can be used to receive information about road conditions and travel advisories. If your car is not equipped with a radio, use a portable one.



It's also a good idea to carry some survival items in your vehicle that might come in handy should you become stranded. Those include a shovel, traction mats, flashlight, tow chain or strap, tool kit, first-aid kit, flares, dry sand, tire chains, sleeping bags or blankets, ice scraper, candles and matches.

Periodically recheck your vehicle to ensure it is properly maintained. If you're mechanically challenged, have a qualified mechanic complete the work that is beyond your abilities.

When traveling in extreme conditions, you may have to depend on your vehicle for survival. Don't let your negligence be the reason it lets you down. 

ATHER

Driving Tips



'Tis the Season for Driving Safely



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<https://crc.army.mil>

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Diving to Strength

Story by Staff Sgt. Jim Greenhill

SIX months after an explosion cost him his lower right arm, Wisconsin Army National Guard Sgt. Darrell Salzman was treading water — literally. “The hardest thing that I’ve had to do since the injury was actually here,” Sgt. Salzman said as he floated in full scuba gear in Walter Reed Army Medical Center’s aquatic-therapy pool in Washington, D.C.

“You have to tread water for 10 minutes with half a hand. That was so hard to do. A couple of times, I went underwater, but I stuck with it.”

The explosion in Iraq cost Sgt. Salzman his right arm below the elbow and the ring finger on his left hand. It also damaged nerves and fingers on his left hand.

Mr. John W. Thompson, Sgt. Salzman’s scuba instructor, calls water the great equalizer. Sgt. Salzman and other wounded Soldiers agree.

“Soldiers Undertaking Disabled Scuba Diving” is a new, all-volunteer

program for wounded servicemembers at WRAMC.

SUDS is the brainchild of Mr. Thompson, a former Outward Bound instructor who is certified by the Professional Association of Diving Instructors and by the Handicapped Scuba Association.

The goal is to challenge wounded Soldiers and give them a skill that they can continue to enjoy into old age, he said.

New to scuba diving, Sgt. Salzman is far from new to the water. “I’m in the water all the time,” he said. “In the summer it’s always been my life.”

A homebuilder by trade, he was a lumberjack sports competitor at age 5, specializing in logrolling and boom running.

A fixture on ESPN’s “Great Outdoor Games,” he won 14 medals and ESPN’s 2005 ESPY Award for Best Outdoor Sports Athlete. He has been both semi-pro and pro, tied for the all-time medal winner in the “Great Outdoor Games,” and set log-rolling and boom-running world records.

Sgt. Salzman, 27, plans to return to college and perhaps teach industrial education or shop.

“With my injuries, I have to relearn everything,” he said. “I used to be right-handed. Now I’m left-hand-

▲ Wisconsin Army National Guard Sgt. Darrell Salzman is a participant in the “Soldiers Undertaking Disabled Scuba Diving” program at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C.

ed, but I have a damaged left hand, so I’ve got to relearn everything, from tying my shoes to how to pack my bag.”

In the aquatic-therapy pool, Sgt. Salzman is relearning and expanding his water skills.

“I had never scuba-dived before,” he said. “It’s a whole other world. I can pretty much do everything in the pool that I could do before.”

“The scuba-aquatic therapy has definitely boosted his confidence,” said Sgt. Salzman’s wife, Josie. “He can scuba dive just fine, just like any other person.”

Other therapeutic programs available to wounded Soldiers at Walter Reed include fly-fishing, deep-sea fishing and kayaking.

Contributors to SUDS include the Annapolis Scuba Center, the Chatham Bay Foundation, Disabled Sports USA and PADI.

To learn more about the Soldiers Undertaking Disabled Scuba Diving program, visit www.sudsdiving.org. To donate to SUDS’ support, visit Disabled Sports USA at www.dsusa.org and specify that the donation is for the SUDS program. 📧

Staff Sgt. Jim Greenhill works for the National Guard Bureau Public Affairs Office.

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Thanks to a paid scholarship from the U.S. Army, **2nd Lt. Llana Caldwell, Third-Year Dental Student and Army Scholarship recipient, University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio, Texas**, is able to fully focus on her dental education. Her dental school tuition is completely covered, and upon graduation, she will be able to make a difference for her country, her fellow Soldiers and herself. There's strong. Then there's Army Strong. Apply today for a scholarship; call 800-557-8867 or visit healthcare.goarmy.com/hpspdental.



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